

VZCZCXYZ0010
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUCNDT #0864/01 2692224
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 252224Z SEP 08
FM USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4995

UNCLAS USUN NEW YORK 000864

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ECON](#) [BR](#) [US](#) [FR](#) [RP](#) [QA](#) [LI](#) [TU](#) [AR](#) [MA](#)

YI, TZ, GB, UNGA

SUBJECT: AT UN, HEADS OF STATE BEGIN 63RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY
GENERAL DEBATE

11. SUMMARY: The United Nations General Debate opened on September 22 with several heads of state taking the floor. Most speakers mentioned the global food crisis, and many spoke on peace-building, energy issues, global warming, the financial crisis, and human rights. UN reform was another common theme, with many -- led by GA President d'Escoto of Nicaragua -- calling for a more democratic and inclusive Security Council. The following spoke: Brazilian President Lula da Silva; President Bush; French President Sarkozy; President of the Philippines Macapagal-Arroyo; Qatari Amir Sheikh Khalifa Al-Thani; Liberian President Johnson-Sirleaf; Turkish President Gul; Argentine President de Kirchner; Madagascar President Ravalomanana; Serbian President Tadic; and Gabonese Vice-President Di Ndinge. Topic covered included: the economic and financial crisis; democracy-building in Iraq, Afghanistan and Zimbabwe; EU-Russia relations; threats posed by a nuclear Iran; peace and stability in Africa; Kosovo independence; and Middle East peace. All statements are available at [www.un.org/ga/63/general debate](http://www.un.org/ga/63/general%20debate). END SUMMARY.

12. On September 22, the first of over 120 heads of state and 70 other senior delegates undertook the UN's annual General Debate extending through September 29. Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva repeatedly emphasized in his remarks the gravity of the economic and financial crisis, which he feared threatened the world's economy. He strongly criticized policies favoring "adventurers and opportunists," quoting a Brazilian economist: "We must not allow speculators' profits always to be privatized, while their losses are invariably socialized." He touched upon the food crisis, the energy crisis, the "risks to world trade" that would result should an agreement not be reached at the Doha Round, and the "unrestrained degradation of the environment." He criticized the "populist nationalism" being "unabashedly" practiced in developed countries, and called for an overhaul of the multilateral system to address the challenges of the twenty-first century. Lula da Silva noted the new political, economic, and trade structure in today's world, and highlighted the increasing role of Latin America in global affairs.

13. President Bush's address emphasized Member States' obligation to govern responsibly, and to solve problems "before they spill across borders." He said the UN and other multilateral organizations are needed more than ever, and highlighted a need to cooperate closely to prevent terrorist attacks from occurring rather than simply passing resolutions in their aftermath. He underscored the important role democratic governance played in promoting peace and security. President Bush touched upon the progress made in Afghanistan and Iraq, noting that multinational efforts to establish democratic governments have proven successful thus far. He called upon Member States to support other young democracies.

14. French President Nicolas Sarkozy, speaking, he said, on behalf of the European Union, noted the importance of working to achieve peace in Darfur; to avert the food crisis; to fight global warming and provide universal access to water

and energy; and to stop "monetary, social and ecological dumping." Sarkozy emphasized Europe's desire to establish links with Russia, proposing to create a "continent-wide economic space which would unite Russia and Europe." However, Sarkozy said that Europe could not compromise when it comes to the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of states, nor on respect for international law. Europe's message, he continued, was that the use of force to settle disputes was unacceptable. He cautioned that Europe could not accept a nuclear-armed Iran, which would present a threat to regional peace and stability, and added that Europe could not tolerate calls for Israel's destruction. He called for inclusion of Africa, in some fashion, in the permanent membership of the Security Council, and for the enlargement of the G-8 to 13 or 14 members.

¶5. Serbian President Boris Tadic protested Kosovo's "unilateral declaration of independence," which he said threatens the core UN principle of the sovereign equality of states and presents the most dangerous challenge to the nature of the international system since the UN was formed. He cautioned that Kosovar independence would create a precedent for the "dozens of Kosovos" around the world, which will each claim an exception to international law. He assured the Assembly that Serbia would not use force to address its grievance, but had instead submitted a resolution to the GA to ask the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to render an advisory opinion on the compliance of Kosovo's independence with international law. Pending the ICJ's decision, Tadic promised that Serbia would remain "a good-faith partner in the interim administration of Kosovo," and called for the Security Council to approve the mandate of the EU's civilian presence there (EULEX). Tadic concluded by

affirming that Serbia will one day join the EU, and that by doing so, will belong to the unifying force in the region in hopes of reversing the trend of "Balkanization." In pursuit of EU membership, Tadic said, Serbia is "fully cooperating" with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

¶6. In his dual role as Chairman of the African Union (AU) and President of Tanzania, Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete outlined the threats to reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) posed by the global food, economic and security crises. Madagascar and Gabon echoed these concerns, calling on donor nations to fulfill their pledges of assistance. The leaders noted that the effects of the global food crisis are most acute in Africa, and listed agricultural subsidies; tariff policies among developed nations; climate change; and the increased production of biofuels as contributing factors to the current situation.

¶7. Balancing these concerns, Kikwete discussed the successes of the AU in building peace and political stability in Africa (thanking the UN and the EU for their assistance), fostering democratic elections, enhancing the rule of law, and fighting corruption. He called the September 15, 2008 power-sharing agreement in Zimbabwe a "landmark breakthrough," crediting the Zimbabwean leaders and South African President Thabo Mbeki. There are still conflicts of concern, he continued, pointing to Darfur, Somalia and the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo as ongoing challenges. On Sudan, Kikwete voiced the AU opinion that an indictment of Sudanese President Bashir would complicate the deployment of UN forces to that war-torn country, stating that the first priority should be to ensure stability there. The Tanzanian and Gabonese leaders discussed the need for UN reform, with Kikwete calling for Security Council reforms to include two permanent seats with veto powers for African nations as well as two additional non-permanent seats.

¶8. Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf noted that Liberia does not always follow the "party line" or the positions of allies on issues related to Africa. Referring to the situation in Zimbabwe, she said Liberia had taken a stand because it wanted to demonstrate that fair elections

and equitable political participation were essential to achieving peace. Johnson-Sirleaf called for strong support to the AU and to sub-regional organizations to work towards peace in Darfur, Chad, Niger, and Congo. Johnson-Sirleaf thanked the U.S. for its Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, which seeks to promote trade rather than aid.

¶9. Turkish President Abdullah Gul highlighted Turkey's expanding role in resolving regional and global issues, including through co-sponsoring the Alliance of Civilizations initiative under UN auspices, underscoring its decision to seek a non-permanent seat on the Security Council for 2009-2010. Gul said Turkey is helping to resolve conflicts in the Middle East by advancing peace talks between Syria and Israel, among other efforts; supporting the people and government of Iraq; and fostering cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan to combat terrorism. A peaceful settlement to the Iran nuclear question, in conformity with IAEA norms, is another top diplomatic priority. Describing Turkey as an emerging donor nation, Gul noted his country's increased levels of bilateral development assistance and enhanced contributions and engagement with the United Nations.

¶10. Argentine President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner urged Iran to comply with the Interpol-ratified arrest warrants for the Iranian citizens accused of carrying out the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy and the 1994 bombing of the Jewish-Argentine Mutual Association in Argentina, promising the accused the full guarantees of the Argentine justice system. She commented that contrary to the widely held belief that financial crises begin in lesser-developed countries, the current crisis began in "the world's largest economy," and pointed to recent USG actions to mitigate the economic downturn as validation for state intervention in the market.

¶11. President of the Philippines Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo said that the "terrible tsunami" of economic uncertainty, caused by recent "shocks" to the financial system had created "real and profound" setbacks for the world. She thanked the U.S. for its role in advancing peace and development in Mindanao, and said the government would engage in dialogue once again when the region was secure and its people safe.
Khalilzad